



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
24 August 2006

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-sixth session

Summary record of the 743rd meeting (Chamber A)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 10 August 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Schöpp-Schilling

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the
Convention (*continued*)

Combined second and third periodic report of Uzbekistan

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined second and third periodic report of Uzbekistan (CEDAW/C/UZB/2-3, CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/3, CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/3/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Uzbekistan took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan), introducing the State party's combined second and third periodic report, said that 20 State agencies and more than 10 NGOs had taken part in the preparation of the report. There was a tradition in Uzbekistan of close cooperation with NGOs, both on the preparation of reports to the United Nations treaty bodies and on the implementation of treaty bodies' recommendations. Implementation of the National Plan of Action for fulfilling the recommendations of the Committee was monitored by the Government on an ongoing basis. To date, 25 of the Committee's 28 recommendations pertaining to the initial report of Uzbekistan had been implemented in full. His introduction would focus on developments in the two years since the submission of the periodic report.

3. Uzbekistan was committed to principles of gender equality and to fulfilling its international obligations with respect to the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention. In the area of legislation, Parliament had taken steps, following ratification of the Convention, to implement it in national law, and all the fundamental rights of women were enshrined in the Constitution. Laws adopted in recent years complied fully with the provisions of the Convention, which had priority status in national legislation.

4. A range of institutional measures had also been taken. Both State agencies and NGOs for the protection of women's rights had been established and there was effective monitoring of respect for the rights of women and children. In accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, national institutions for the protection of human rights, including women's rights, had been set up. The Ombudsman and the Women's Committee had jointly

established a Consultative and Analytical Council which monitored the implementation of laws and international instruments relating to the rights and interests of women. Civil society institutions for the protection of women's rights were also active in Uzbekistan and the number of women's NGOs was growing. Within citizens' self-governing bodies, experienced women had been appointed as consultants to provide social and psychological support to women and young people.

5. Another set of measures for implementation of the Convention dealt with education and information. The National Programme of Action for Human Rights, which focused on, among other things, educating women on human rights, had been implemented. In the past three years, more than 100 international human rights instruments had been published in Uzbek and widely disseminated. In schools and higher education institutions, training courses were held on human rights and the basic principles of the Constitution and the law, with focus on gender issues.

6. National and international seminars and conferences were held on a regular basis to improve the political and legal awareness of women. A school for women leaders was in operation, and measures were being taken to increase women's level of social and political activity and to provide them with vocational training. Efforts were being made to promote women to senior positions in Government ministries and to foster women's creative and sporting activities.

7. Parliament was also promoting the protection of women's rights by adopting laws to ensure gender equality. Parliamentary committees monitored the implementation of laws relating to women's rights and of the provisions of the Convention, as well as other relevant legislation such as the Labour Code, the Family Code, the Housing Code and pension laws. Parliamentary hearings were held in the Senate on the implementation of the Convention.

8. International measures were also being taken to implement the Convention. Uzbekistan fulfilled its obligations under international human rights instruments and cooperated actively with United Nations entities, including the treaty bodies. National plans of action were in place for the implementation of their recommendations.

9. The number of women's NGOs in Uzbekistan had doubled to around 200 since the consideration of the initial report. One of their main areas of activity was the provision of social and professional support for women, measures to ensure equal representation of women in the authorities and in decision-making at all levels, and the improvement of women's position in the economy and the job market. Another area of activity covered equal access to education and training, expansion of women's participation in development programmes and social reform projects, strengthening of mechanisms for the protection of women's rights and improvement of women's legal literacy. More than half of women's NGOs were involved in educational projects. Women's NGOs were also active in the protection of mothers and children, family planning and reproductive health, and the elimination of environmental health risks. In the past year alone, a national association of NGOs and a fund to support them had been set up, a strategy to promote gender equality in decision-making had been adopted, a forum of women's NGOs had been held on the theme of women's place and role in the democratic renewal of society, and booklets on gender equality and the protection of women's rights had been published.

10. In 2004, the first elections to a bicameral Parliament had been held, prior to which the electoral laws had been amended to establish a 30 per cent quota for women candidates. Today, women accounted for 15 per cent of members of the Senate, 18 per cent of members of the Legislative Chamber and more than 20 per cent of employees in the judicial system.

11. The Government was also taking steps to support the most vulnerable women and families, in particular through the introduction of local employment programmes for women for 2005-2007 with a view to creating jobs, including in rural areas, granting credit on preferential terms to small businesses employing or headed by women, training unemployed women in running their own business, and amending existing legislation to establish a quota of jobs to be set aside for women with children. A Decree of the President on the promotion of home-based work established incentives for employers to expand the numbers of women working from home. In addition, to provide social and psychological support to women during the transitional period, local authorities were setting up special centres for women and their families.

12. Despite the progress made, certain difficulties remained in the implementation of the Convention. Since becoming independent, Uzbekistan had experienced serious economic, social and political problems that particularly affected the vulnerable groups in society. The difficulties mainly involved the transition to a democratic system and improving people's legal awareness and their attitude towards the development of civil society. Ecological problems persisted in the Aral Sea area. The geopolitical situation in Central Asia, in particular the armed conflicts in neighbouring countries and the continuing problem of drug trafficking from Afghanistan, also had an impact on Uzbekistan. Moreover, terrorism and religious extremism contributed to instability, and efforts to combat them consumed substantial resources.

13. A recently published report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Uzbekistan prepared by nine specialized agencies of the United Nations had stated that Uzbekistan had achieved more tangible results than most countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with regard to indicators of human development, in particular since the early 1990s. Specific national targets for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals had been set by the Government in conjunction with the United Nations Office in Uzbekistan and had been incorporated into nine State programmes which placed particular emphasis on gender issues.

14. The Millennium Development Goals were implemented in Uzbekistan through the joint efforts of the Government, civil society and international partners. The goal of universal access to primary education had already been achieved: indeed, the number of girls and boys in both primary and secondary education was equal. However, further efforts were needed to improve the quality of education and to increase the number of women in higher education. Efforts were also under way to reduce infant mortality and improve maternal health. Some of the Millennium Development Goals, such as halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, would be more difficult to achieve because of a number of domestic and external factors. The expansion of women's rights and opportunities and the achievement of gender equality were fundamental to Uzbekistan's efforts to achieve the remaining Millennium Development Goals.

15. Drawing attention to a variety of additional material on gender issues in Uzbekistan that had been made available to the Committee, he said that he looked forward to a constructive dialogue on the preparation and implementation of a National Plan of Action for implementing the concluding comments of the Committee on the combined second and third periodic report.

Articles 1 to 6

16. **Ms. Šimonović** commended the State party for its elaboration of a National Plan of Action for fulfilling the recommendations of the Committee. Few other countries had adopted such a plan. However, one measure not yet implemented was the prohibition of discrimination under article 1 of the Convention. In addition, little information had been provided on the results of the measures taken under the Plan of Action. She asked whether the draft law on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women had now been adopted and requested information on its content, in particular whether it prohibited both direct and indirect discrimination. She also wished to know whether the Convention could be invoked directly before the courts and whether there were any cases where it actually had been invoked.

17. **Ms. Morvai** also requested more information on how the law regarding women was put into practice and on the number of court cases involving discrimination, irrespective of whether the Convention was invoked. In particular, she asked how many cases of discrimination in employment had been brought before the courts and what the outcome of such cases had been. With regard to domestic violence, she would like to know how many perpetrators had been charged and convicted, whether those who committed domestic violence without killing their victims were usually convicted and what the typical penalties were. She also asked how many people had been convicted of trafficking in women.

18. She wished to know whether women had effective access to justice in cases of discrimination, for example, whether free legal aid was available to them and whether lawyers were trained in handling discrimination cases. She also asked how many women approached such lawyers for advice and representation.

19. **Ms. Saiga** requested clarification of the status of international instruments in national law. On the one

hand, international law was said to become part of national legislation once it had been ratified but, on the other, domestic laws had to be adopted in order to meet international human rights obligations. Moreover, citizens could invoke international instruments in court, yet court decisions did not refer to such instruments directly, and the courts applied only national laws. The Government should ensure that national legislation was in conformity with international instruments, including the Convention.

20. She also requested more information about the current status of the draft law on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, the draft laws on the prevention of trafficking in and exploitation of persons, the amendments to the Family Code, the Labour Code and the Criminal Code, and the framework special act on domestic violence.

21. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, noted that the report indicated that information had been drawn from a number of sources. That being the case, she wondered how State accountability for the report was ensured. Had the report, for example, been discussed by Parliament or approved by the Cabinet of Ministers? She would also like to have more information about how implementation of the Convention was being monitored. In his opening statement, the Head of Delegation had mentioned several parliamentary hearings. She would like to know who initiated those hearings and what women's human rights topics had been discussed. Reference had also been made to another monitoring mechanism, the Consultative and Analytical Council, and she would welcome more detail on what role that body played in monitoring implementation of the Convention.

22. She saw no mention in the report of implementation of the Committee's 25 General Recommendations. In that connection, she wondered whether the General Recommendations had been translated into Uzbek. She also wondered whether the Government was familiar with general recommendation No. 25, which explained the nature of temporary special measures. In her view, apart from the 30 per cent quota for women nominated by political parties as candidates for elected office, the measures mentioned in the report were not really what the Committee would consider temporary special measures, which should not be confused with general policies for women.

23. The State party's responses to the questions and issues raised by the Committee (CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/Add.1) mentioned a proposal to amend the Constitution to expand the protection clause to include fatherhood. That would be a very progressive step towards more equal sharing of parenting responsibilities between men and women, and she would like to know what progress had been made in that regard. Based on her reading of the report, the Government appeared to be placing too much emphasis on educating women and girls about, for example, marriage, child spacing and related topics, with too little attention to similar education programmes for men.

24. She enquired whether the Government had a time frame for considering ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and encouraged it to do so as soon as possible. Similarly, she urged the Government to approve the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

25. Lastly, she would like to know how the gender dimension was incorporated institutionally and structurally in the National Centre for Human Rights and whether the Centre followed the Principles Relating to the Status and Functioning of National Institutions for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (Paris Principles). She would also appreciate more information on how the partnership between the National Centre for Human Rights and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan worked in practice.

26. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) confirmed that Uzbekistan had implemented 25 of the 28 recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding comments on the initial report submitted by his country (CEDAW/C/UZB/1). The three that it had not yet implemented were the recommendations on ratification of the Optional Protocol of the Convention, approval of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and adoption of a law on equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The latter had been drafted and was currently being considered by the Parliament, but its adoption had been delayed, in part owing to the process of parliamentary reform under way since 2000, when the people of Uzbekistan had decided, by referendum, to move from a unicameral to a bicameral legislature. The Optional Protocol and the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention were being examined very carefully,

but draft legislation providing for their adoption had not yet been put before Parliament.

27. The status of the Convention in the legal system of Uzbekistan, particularly the courts, was well defined. The Convention was not a component part of the Constitution or the legal system, as was the case, for example, in Germany and the Russian Federation. However, international law took precedence over domestic law and, if there was a contradiction between the two bodies of law, international law prevailed.

28. Under the Uzbek legal system, cases were decided only on the basis of national law, although that did not mean that the courts did not have the right to refer to any of the various international treaties and agreements to which Uzbekistan was a party. He knew of no court case in which the Convention had been specifically invoked, but that did not mean that it was not being applied. International law was implemented through domestic law. The standards of the Convention were thus being applied through national legislation.

29. The concept of discrimination set forth in article 1 of the Convention had been fully taken into account in the draft law on equal opportunities and rights for men and women. It was also reflected in article 6 of the Labour Code, which prohibited any form of discrimination. Article 1 of the Convention was thus being fully implemented.

30. The Government was aware of the Committee's General Recommendations on domestic violence and was endeavouring to apply them in the legal and other spheres. A number of studies had been conducted, mainly by NGOs, to determine the magnitude of the problem, and there had been round tables and seminars to consider the necessity of formulating a law on violence against women. There was a good possibility that such legislation would be drafted after the law on gender equality had been adopted.

31. The general recommendations were well known in Uzbekistan and were used to interpret the various articles of the Convention. They had not, to his knowledge, been translated into Uzbek, but he welcomed the suggestion that they should be and undertook to ensure that translated versions of the recommendations were distributed among the governmental and non-governmental bodies that contributed to the preparation of the Government's periodic reports to the Committee.

32. At present the Constitution protected motherhood but did not afford similar protection for fathers. The Government was therefore considering an amendment to correct that inadequacy. In the meantime, the Family Code had already been thus amended. Concerning education programmes for men, it was true that most of the educational initiatives under way targeted mainly women. The Government was aware that it needed to do more in the way of educating men, who were the main violators of the rights of women, and it intended to do so.

33. The 30 per cent quota for women candidates was indeed a temporary special measure, but it was not the only one. The Government was endeavouring to apply such measures in a broad range of areas.

34. The National Centre for Human Rights did operate on the basis of the Paris Principles and also the principles endorsed at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. Concerning cooperation between the Centre and the Women's Committee, the two entities worked closely together, notably in preparing the periodic reports for the Committee. They also collaborated in informational and educational work, such as the organization of seminars, conferences and training courses and the publication of books and other materials. One of the books distributed to the Committee at the present meeting had been prepared jointly by the Centre and the Women's Committee, with support from international partners.

35. Regarding the work of the Consultative and Analytical Council and monitoring of implementation of the Convention, a study had been organized in various regions, involving local authorities, who conducted evaluations to see how the provisions of the Convention were being implemented in their respective areas. The findings had then been extrapolated to the national level and had been widely discussed, both in government circles and in the NGO community. The Consultative and Analytical Council had compiled conclusions and recommendations based on that discussion, which had been submitted to a Parliamentary committee to guide its future work. The Council was considering preparing an annual report on the status of women in Uzbekistan.

36. Finally, the Government would submit the statistics requested by the Committee in writing at a later date, although data on some matters might not be available. The country's statistical and accounting

systems were relics of the Soviet era: the transition to new systems was not yet complete and indicators were lacking in some areas.

37. **Ms. Norboeva** (Uzbekistan) noted that the National Plan of Action aimed at fulfilling the recommendations made by the Committee in response to the first report of Uzbekistan in 2001 had been approved by special decision of the Cabinet of Ministers. Its formulation had involved not only governmental agencies but also the NGOs working in the area of women's rights. The Committee's recommendations had been translated into Uzbek and distributed among government officials and agencies, NGOs and territorial administrations. Progress in implementing the plan was examined every quarter at meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers.

38. With regard to the availability of legal assistance for women, there was a special programme designed to increase women's participation in public life. One component of the programme was devoted to enhancing women's social, economic and legal knowledge. Uzbekistan had also put in place telephone hotlines and special centres to assist women who were victims of violence. In the past year, 1,900 women had sought the services of special lawyers and 55 per cent of those cases had involved violence.

39. Some women's organizations in Uzbekistan did work on gender equality that specifically targeted men. One such organization sought to educate men about their role in the family.

40. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan), responding to the questions concerning the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, said that the law had been drafted by NGOs concerned with women's rights. As he had noted earlier, it had already been submitted to Parliament. Three sources had been considered in drafting the law: (1) international standards on human rights, including the Convention; (2) the legislation and experience of other countries, notably those of Scandinavia; and (3) national experience, including relevant existing legislation. The Government would welcome the Committee's suggestions for improvement of the draft legislation.

41. **Ms. Bokpé-Gnacadjá** noted that the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, according to the report and the State party's responses to the questions and issues raised by the Committee, seemed to be playing a pivotal role with regard to gender equality at national

level, but the responses (CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/3/Add.1) stated that the Committee was registered as a “civic” or non-governmental organization with the Ministry of Justice. It was unclear to her whether that Committee was a public body, a mixed public-private organization or an entirely independent entity. She would appreciate clarification regarding its status and means of financing.

42. She was concerned to read in the introduction to the report that women’s committees at the local level were not well regarded by Uzbek women, especially in rural areas. The report also indicated that the committees were not responsive to the needs of women at the grassroots level and that their members were not held accountable for their activities. In the light of that information, she wondered whether the committees were having any real impact on the lives of the women they were intended to serve. She would like to hear the delegation’s thoughts on the matter and would also welcome information on any strategies or plans that were envisaged to improve the image and work of the committees.

43. Regarding the draft law on equal rights and opportunities for men and women, the report noted that a number of forms of discrimination against women persisted, particularly as a result of persistent patriarchal customs and attitudes. She would like to know whether the draft law addressed those forms of discrimination and the reasons for their persistence.

44. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** acknowledged the Government’s efforts to change the discriminatory customs, attitudes and stereotypes that hindered women’s enjoyment of their human rights in all areas of life. However, she was concerned that some of those efforts might unintentionally lead to a reinforcement of stereotypes because of their focus on women’s reproductive role and their heavy emphasis on motherhood and the family. It appeared that not much attention was being paid to women’s productive role. She encouraged the Government to take a second look at some of its activities aimed at improving the status of women in Uzbekistan.

45. The report stated that polygamy was prohibited. However, it also indicated that the practice continued, despite the prohibition. She wondered how many cases of polygamy had been prosecuted under the Family Code. She would also like to know whether any impact assessment had been undertaken to determine what

effect the various laws and activities were having in terms of eliminating stereotypes and discriminatory practices.

46. **Ms. Gaspard** sought clarification regarding the status of the National Centre for Human Rights. If she understood correctly, the centre had been created on the basis of the so-called Paris Principles. Such human rights centres were, in principle, consultative bodies. She therefore found it a little odd that the report of a State party should be presented by the president of such a centre. She wondered whether the centre was an independent entity and whether the report was, in fact, the report of the Government of Uzbekistan or was the report of the consultative centre on human rights.

47. She commended the Government for the action taken to implement the recommendations made by the Committee on the first report of Uzbekistan in 2001. At that time, the Committee had expressed strong concern about the resurgence of patriarchal attitudes and behaviours. Neither the report nor the responses gave much information on progress in that regard. She agreed with the previous speaker’s observation that many of the activities described in the report seemed destined only to reinforce traditional views of women as wives and mothers. She would like more information on measures that had been taken, particularly in the educational sphere and in the media, to promote a more egalitarian image of women and men.

48. **Ms. Tan** asked whether judges and law enforcement personnel were systematically trained to deal with domestic violence, whether school programmes included information on the issue and whether special centres had been set up to assist the victims. If so, what were the effects? She also requested statistics on domestic violence and its causes, together with information on therapy for victims and on prevention programmes at every level of education. How could the victims of domestic violence seek redress? Were women and girls encouraged to report domestic violence? Did the police and social workers treat such reports seriously and were they followed up? Were women taught instead how to avoid domestic violence? How many shelters or rehabilitation centres for abuse victims were there?

49. **Ms. Simms** said that, although the issues of trafficking in women and prostitution were discussed and addressed by the Uzbek authorities, including

through legislation, the issues were of serious concern for the Committee. Social attitudes to equality, stereotypes and patriarchal behaviour were significant factors. The women and girls involved were invariably socially excluded or marginalized owing to women's traditional role as the guardians of social morality and their maternal responsibilities in particular. Such women and girls often failed to report abuse for that reason. She enquired whether there were any official structures designed to protect all victims of trafficking and prostitution, including those from other countries and those who had returned to Uzbekistan from other countries where they had been prostitutes or concubines. Were there specific rehabilitation or care centres for women who were regarded as having lost their value in Uzbek society, following rape, under-age sex or prostitution, and how were they run and funded?

50. With regard to the role played by NGOs, she asked whether official policies on gender equality, prostitution and trafficking were driven by them or by the Government. If the former, that implied a novel and, in some ways, commendable approach. However, it was necessary for a certain dynamic tension to exist between Government and civil society, including a degree of ideological control over NGO activities counterbalanced by NGO criticism of Government policy. Were NGOs funded by the Government?

51. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that the Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan had originally been a quasi-non-governmental organization set up at the State's initiative. A presidential decree of 2004, intended to strengthen support for the Committee and its local sections, had significantly raised its status and its head was the Deputy Prime Minister. Originally covering a broad range of issues, its remit had been narrowed to those described in the periodic report. All Committee activities were scrutinized at national and local levels, and any shortcomings were addressed, with a view to protecting women's rights to the full. The previous assessment of the Committee's activities had taken place in May 2004, as indicated in the report, but since then its work to further women's rights had made considerable progress. The Committee was extremely self-critical and positive changes had recently been made to its working methods. As for the monitoring group set up by the Committee and the Ombudsman, as explained in the periodic report, it conducted local analytical surveys which were sent to the Cabinet of Ministers. Its recommendations were not

binding but its purpose was to analyse implementation of the Convention nationwide and determine the reasons why discrimination persisted in some areas. Its most important task was to recommend ways of rooting out the causes of discrimination.

52. Turning to the question of eliminating gender stereotypes in Uzbekistan, he suggested that it was inappropriate to apply the western European or North American approach to the sharp distinction between women as mothers and their role as individuals in society. While there was no question of discriminating against women who could not reproduce, no Uzbek woman would object to being described as a "mother heroine". Although Uzbek families tended to be large and children were regarded as precious or even sacred, women were not confined to their homes but could play an active role in society. Equal rights for men and women were seen as a way of life in Uzbekistan but some practices, acceptable in the West, such as same-sex marriage, would be criticized and even condemned by traditional Uzbek society, where Islamic values prevailed. He rejected the notion that patriarchal attitudes or focus on motherhood were retrograde ideas or that Western approaches to human rights should be imposed on other countries. It was Uzbek Government policy to enhance the role of women in the family and in society at large. Furthermore, the only way to change behaviour was to raise awareness of equality among men and women, at all levels of society, through education, rather than by imposing values from elsewhere.

53. Repeating that polygamy was illegal, he said that 22 criminal cases had gone before the courts over the previous year, an increase over earlier years. A draft law on gender equality currently before parliament was intended to address the situation and the Institute for Monitoring Legislation in Force, attached to the Oliy Majlis, was examining it from the gender perspective.

54. In Uzbekistan, much progress had been made with regard to civil society and NGOs were deemed to be partners of the State; he suggested that the notion that there had to be a dynamic tension between the two also came from the West. The State took the views of NGOs into account without controlling or financing them. Only select NGOs, the winners of a national competition, received financial support from a special government fund. The National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which he chaired, was an independent State executive body

founded on the Paris Principles. Independent from Government and acting on its own initiative, its role was to coordinate all State human rights bodies, and one of its main tasks was to prepare and present official reports to the United Nations treaty bodies.

55. **Ms. Norboeva** (Uzbekistan) said that the Women's Committee, a non-governmental body, had 65 members from every region. It not only reflected the interests of all Uzbek women but also was accountable to them, thanks to local representation nationwide. The presidential decree of 2004 had strengthened the central unit and the local sections. A number of new posts had been created and financed from the State budget, but the issues it examined were not decided by the Government. It issued quarterly reports which, among other things, addressed ways of solving problems of gender equality in enterprises, schools, institutes and *makhallya* committees.

56. The President and Government of Uzbekistan had decided that enhancing women's roles in every area of economic, social and political life should be a priority, with emphasis on female employment and health, particularly relating to maternity. Thanks to sectoral employment programmes, 170,000 new jobs for women had been created every year, by encouraging the establishment by women of small and medium-sized enterprises, and work in spheres that had discriminated against women in the past. The Ombudsman had also acted, by means of microcredits, to create social units and jobs for migrants, with special guarantees for children. All such measures were supervised by NGOs.

57. All forms of violence, including murder, rape and violence in sexual relations, especially against women, were currently being studied and analysed. In the first half of 2006, 1,316 criminal cases had been heard in the courts. Preventive measures were being taken, and victims were treated in rehabilitation and crisis centres run by social organizations, such as the Women's Committee and the *Makhallyah* Fund. The number of such centres had increased from 2 in 1996 to around 40. The State provided the organizations with premises and other material assistance.

58. With regard to trafficking in women, Uzbekistan adhered to the international instruments and approach to the issue. Of the 142 criminal cases involving exploitation in the first half of 2006, 110 had concerned women. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was

cooperating with local administrations and the Women's Committee to combat all forms of trafficking, while its victims already received psychological and medical treatment at rehabilitation centres. Many victims had benefited from legal assistance and helplines were also being set up to assist them.

59. A new bill before Parliament proposed that the age of consent for women be raised from 17 to 18 years.

60. Fighting prostitution was a priority for the State and NGOs alike. It was estimated that some 2,000 women were involved in Uzbekistan. According to a presidential decree of 2004, the relevant bodies were required to offer prostitutes, especially minors, religious and moral education, and help them to find alternative employment. Local authorities and law enforcement officers were required to do all they could to prevent prostitution and related activities.

61. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that statistics on domestic violence would be provided in written form, when available. He agreed that prostitution was a major problem facing Uzbekistan; many prostitutes from Uzbekistan found work in neighbouring countries and many women arrived from other countries for the same reason. The Uzbek Government took the problem seriously and was working with international organizations to eliminate trafficking in women and children. Although public opinion condemned prostitution and anyone involved in it, it was the State's role to protect all women's rights and offer the victims of sexual exploitation all the assistance they required, including rehabilitation at women's rehabilitation centres.

62. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** said that the report did not provide enough data and analysis concerning every article of the Convention to give the Committee an overview of the situation facing women in Uzbekistan; the information document provided on Uzbekistan's efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals was far more informative and she hoped that future periodic reports would follow that example.

63. According to the response to question 4, in the responses to the list of issues and questions for consideration of the combined second and third periodic report (CEDAW/C/UZB/Q/3/Add.1), the existing criminal procedure and administrative legislation did not provide a specific penalty for domestic violence or preventive measures to protect

women. She asked whether the Uzbek Government intended to remedy that situation and, if so, what measures were planned.

64. **Ms. Saiga** wondered, since the new post of consultant for religious, spiritual and moral education was funded by the State, whether the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan was also funded by the State. How could the Women's Committee implement programmes? Would the consultant post aggravate the patriarchal situation?

65. The Convention provisions on NGOs and motherhood were international rather than Western standards. What was the position of Uzbekistan on the issue? Projects and plans must target men as well as women.

66. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, wondered how the Government could accelerate the parliamentary process for gender legislation reform and whether the Chairman of the National Human Rights Centre had a role in the process. She enquired whether Uzbekistan's report had been discussed in Parliament or in the cabinet and asked how the work of the Consultative and Analytical Council was monitored in the regions. Noting that, if there was no sharing of household duties, women would not be able to engage in activities beyond mothering, she asked how household roles could be shared and perceptions changed.

67. **Ms. Šimonović** wondered how many free women's shelters existed and whether they were operated by NGOs. Did the Government contribute to shelter operation and were there guidelines for services offered and procedures in shelters?

68. **Ms. Bokpé-Gnacadjá** wondered whether the Government and NGOs shared statistical data. Information from international organizations could also alleviate data-gathering challenges faced by the Government.

69. **Ms. Morvai** wondered how many cases against traffickers in women had come before the courts and how many traffickers had been convicted in recent years. Were there cases before the courts on discrimination against women, in particular employment discrimination?

70. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said the report for CEDAW had been completed in December 2003. The information document on the implementation of the

Millennium Development Goals in Uzbekistan, which had been published in Uzbek, Russian and English in August 2006, had been distributed to provide additional information on progress made since then.

71. Statistical data compiled by NGOs and international organizations were invaluable and used to fill in the gaps of the Government data. NGO draft reports were discussed by the State and viewed as a joint effort between NGOs and the Government. Perception of NGOs by civil servants had been negative but a balanced dialogue had eventually been created between NGOs and the Government. NGOs were included in quarterly Government meetings to assess the political and social situation of women.

72. Analysis of the articles of the Convention in relation to Uzbek laws had revealed that a law on gender equality was needed, requiring changes to at least 10 existing laws and the Criminal Code, which were being amended.

73. Western and Eastern approaches to measuring women's rights were fundamentally different. The approach of Uzbekistan was categorically opposed to any contrast between the State and NGOs. It did not require NGOs to criticize the Government, although at times they did. In Uzbekistan, NGOs worked in partnership with the Government and should not be judged by Western standards.

74. The delegation would report to the Government the concerns of CEDAW regarding the need for speedy adoption of the Optional Protocol and article 25 of the Convention. The recommendations of CEDAW would be considered carefully by all State bodies concerned.

75. The National Centre for Human Rights was part of the Government and so was not accountable, but it took up issues of Government bodies and NGOs in documents and reports.

76. Monitoring of the work of the Consultative and Analytical Council was undertaken through questionnaires, with monitoring groups deployed to the regions to study the results of the questionnaire and draft a document. The document was then discussed in parliamentary hearings and at round tables.

77. **Ms. Norboeva** (Uzbekistan) said that the Women's Committee was headed by the Deputy Prime Minister at the level of the Republic, and by deputy heads of administration at the regional level. As the head of a State body, the chairman of the Women's

Committee could give orders to any State or local agency.

78. There were social rehabilitation centres and crisis centres, to which the Government provided comprehensive assistance. There had been approximately 58,000 cases of violence against women, of which approximately 13,000 had involved domestic violence. In addition to legal and psychological counselling, shelters also offered vocational and other training to women.

79. The consultants to citizens' assemblies on religious, spiritual and moral education were attached not to the Women's Committee but to self-government organs of citizens financed under the State budget for employment issues. Moral and religious education was aimed at reducing prostitution and trafficking in women.

80. There had been 18 cases of violations of employment legislation for women in 2005 and labour rights had been fully restored to 10 plaintiffs. There had been 542 cases of violations by enterprises in 2005. The Government and the Federation of Trade Unions were monitoring the issue. The Women's Committee and the Ministries of Labour and Social Protection were also working on women's legal literacy. There had been no violations in 2006.

Articles 7 to 9

81. **Ms. Saiga** noted that the quota of 30 per cent women candidates for elections had not been reached in previous elections. Had the quota been met in the most recent elections? How were political parties sanctioned when they did not reach the quota? Including 30 per cent women on the ballot did not ensure their election. Where were their names placed on the ballots? How many of the 16 senators appointed by the President were women?

82. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked about the criteria for the competition for NGO funding, how much funding was given and whether the funding covered only special projects or overhead costs as well.

83. In reference to the decree requiring NGOs to re-register between May and November 2004, what were the criteria for re-registration and were there any women's NGOs that had been unable to re-register? Had the February 2004 decree restricting foreign

funding to NGOs impacted women's NGOs negatively, and was the Government competition funding designed in part to compensate for the loss of foreign funding?

84. **Ms. Simms** asked how many women represented Uzbekistan as Ambassadors.

85. **Ms. Gaspard** wondered whether children born of foreign women married to Uzbek men had dual citizenship.

86. **Mr. Saidov** said dual citizenship was not possible under Uzbek law.

87. The Central Electoral Commission monitored the 30 per cent rule and could require political parties to meet the quota. Five parties had met the 30 per cent candidate quota in the last elections. Among members of Parliament, 17.5 per cent were women, up from 9 per cent. Uzbekistan had previously been ranked 112 out of 140 countries for the percentage of women deputies, and was currently ranked in fiftieth place.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.